

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES

Tuesday, 3rd September, 2024

Present: Cllr M D Boughton (Chair), Cllr R P Betts, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr D Keers, Cllr K B Tanner and Cllr M Taylor

In attendance: Councillors L Athwal, B Banks, J Clokey, M A J Hood, F A Hoskins, Mrs A S Oakley, Mrs M Tatton and D Thornewell were also present pursuant to Access to Information Rule No 23.

Virtual: Councillors D Harman, M R Rhodes and K S Tunstall participated via MS Teams and joined the discussion when invited to do so by the Chair in accordance with Access to Information Rule No 23.

PART 1 - PUBLIC

CB 24/88 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

CB 24/89 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8 July 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL

CB 24/90 CAPITAL WORKS - CAR PARKS

Consideration was given to progressing a number of fast-track capital plan schemes to allow the implementation of the decisions taken by Cabinet on 30 April 2024 in respect of the new parking proposals throughout the borough.

The three schemes which were required to be transferred from List C to List A of the Capital Plan to enable the introduction of the new parking charges were as set out as follows:

- Bailey Bridge East Car Park Improvements, Aylesford;
- Introduction of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR); and
- Parking Amendments to Car Parks and On-Street Parking.

It was noted that a fast track capital plan evaluation had been completed for each of the above schemes, as set out in Annexes 1, 2 and 3, and a

more detailed project plan would be put together for each of the schemes to set out their respective milestones and timetables in due course.

Particular reference was made to implications for the blue badge holders following the implementation of ANPR enforcement and, in response to questions received and further clarification on the limitation of the technology, the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Infrastructure confirmed that arrangements would be made to enable residents with a blue badge to register their car for free parking in the car parks where ANPR would be introduced to provide access convenience to disabled vehicle users. This was supported by the Cabinet and other Members.

In addition, the benefits of introducing ANPR technology which supported both RingGo and cash payment methods and reflected charge based on actual length of stay were acknowledged. Contactless payment would continue to be investigated, although the challenge around internet connection requirement of the contactless payment machines was recognised.

In response to questions raised by Members on targets set for the schemes to enable measurement of success following implementation, it was explained that these would be set out in the detailed project plans, which would be subject to a post implementation review in 12 months' time to assess the impact of the schemes.

Due regard was given to the policy, financial and value for money considerations and the legal implications and the necessity to fast track the capital plan schemes to enable the implementation of the decisions within the financial year was acknowledged.

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (1) the three fast track capital schemes, shown in Annexes 1, 2 & 3, be transferred to List A of the capital planning this financial year to enable the introduction of new parking charges, subject to an amendment in respect of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) scheme (attached at Annex 2) to reflect that arrangements would be made to enable residents with a blue badge to register to park free of charge at the car parks where ANPR enforcement would be implemented;
- (2) capital funding of £530,000 for the capital works be met from the revenue reserve from capital schemes;
- (3) authority be granted to the Director of Central Services/Deputy Chief Executive to submit a planning application for the scheme in the Bailey Bridge East car park, Aylesford; and

- (4) revenue funding of £15,000 be included in the revised revenue estimates to appoint external consultants to assist in the design of the schemes.

***Recommended to Council**

DECISIONS TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION

EXECUTIVE NON-KEY DECISIONS

CB 24/91 JULY 2024 BUDGETARY CONTROL

(Decision Notice D240087CAB)

The report of the Director of Finance and Transformation presented Members with the current financial position to the end of July 2024 for the 2024/25 Financial Year, in accordance with the Borough Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

Since a revenue budget of £11,671,480 was set by the Council in February 2024, a number of Cabinet and committee decisions had been taken (as set out in Annex 1) with a net impact of a slight reduction of £3,192 on the revenue budget.

Budgetary Control Monitoring Statements for Salaries and Incomes to the end of July 2024 were attached for information at Annexes 2 and 3 respectively, which reflected an underspend of £69,750 against the current salary estimates proportioned to the end of July 2024 and an actual which was £26,345 less than the apportioned income estimate for the same period.

With regard to investment income, both Core and Cashflow funds were shown above the proportion of the original estimates due to continued high base rates which, however, were not anticipated to continue in the long term.

Areas identified as variations to the original estimate as of the end of May 2024 included service fee to the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust, which was below the estimate thanks to the energy efficiency measures and savings, and expenditure on temporary accommodation, which was an overspend above the estimate due to higher than expected level of clients and increasing accommodation costs.

Furthermore, capital expenditure to the end of July 2024 was detailed in Annex 4.

With regard to the savings target as identified in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Members acknowledged that challenge was still ahead in identifying options to close the overall funding gap of £1.7m

despite that the first tranche target of £305,000 to be achieved by April 2025 had already been exceeded. It was therefore suggested that options be invited from members of the three Scrutiny Select Committees and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for evaluation, and this was supported by the Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) as at the end of July 2024, a net favourable variance of circa £291,000 when compared to the proportion of the 2024/25 budget as shown in paragraph 1.6.1 be noted;
- (2) the potential issues surrounding the impact of the current client levels, cost of temporary accommodation and debt recovery within the revenue budget for Homelessness Accommodation be noted;
- (3) the current business rate pool position, as at the end of July 2024 as set out in paragraph 1.7.2, be noted;
- (4) the current spend on Capital Projects for 2024/25 be noted;
- (5) the current position of the Savings Target be noted; and
- (6) Members of the three Scrutiny Select Committees and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be invited to propose options for evaluation in the forthcoming months to assist in bridging the current funding gap.

CB 24/92 TONBRIDGE RACECOURSE SPORTSGROUND MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION

(Decision Notice D240088CAB)

Consideration was given to recommendation CE 24/27 of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee of 17 July 2024 in respect of the draft Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground Management Plan.

Cabinet had due regard to the views of the Scrutiny Select Committee, the financial and value for money considerations, the legal implications and noted the changes proposed to the draft Management Plan, with particular reference made to the representativeness of the Tonbridge Sports Association, which would be taken into consideration when consultation was to be undertaken for review of any management plans in the future.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposed amendments to the draft Management plan, as set out in Annex 2, be approved, subject to amending the proposed responses in respect of footpaths and active travel to read 'unlikely to be realistic'; and
- (2) the draft Management Plan for Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground 2024-28 (attached at Annex 3) be approved.

CB 24/93 RISK MANAGEMENT

(Decision Notice D240089CAB)

Consideration was given to recommendation AU 24/28 of the Audit Committee of 22 July 2024 in respect of risk management process and the Strategic Risk Register (SRR).

Cabinet had due regard to the views of the Committee, the financial and value for money considerations and the legal implications and noted that, as recommended by the consultant, following a review undertaken by the Management Team of all the risks contained within the SRR, a number of changes had been made to the current Register, including the deletion of some risks that were no longer felt to be strategic risks and the titles of some of the risks. The number of 'red' risks on the SRR remained to be 4 as set out below:

- Achievement of Savings and Transformation Strategy
- Failure to agree a Local Plan
- Implementation of the Agile software system
- Contract/Contractor Procurement

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the review undertaken by Management Team in streamlining the Strategic Risk Register, be noted; and
- (2) the updates to the Strategic Risk Register since the last iteration with particular emphasis on those risks categorised as 'RED', be noted.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

CB 24/94 DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET MEMBERS

Details of the Decisions taken in accordance with the rules for the making of decisions by executive members, as set out in Part 4 of the Constitution, were presented for information.

CB 24/95 NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions for September to October 2024 was presented for information.

CB 24/96 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chairman moved, it was seconded and

RESOLVED: That as public discussion would disclose exempt information, the following matters be considered in private.

PART 2 - PRIVATE**DECISIONS TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION****EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS****CB 24/97 LARKFIELD LEISURE CENTRE ROOF RE-FELT AND INSULATION UPGRADE TENDER**

(Decision Notice D240090CAB)

(Reasons: LGA 1972 – Sch 12A Paragraph 3 – Financial or business affairs of any particular person)

Following a formal tender and evaluation process, the report provided details of the tenders received for the roof re-felt and insulation upgrade works at Larkfield Leisure Centre and recommended an award of the contract.

Cabinet had due regard to the evaluation, the risk assessment, financial and value for money considerations and the legal implications and noted that the value of the successful tender was within the budget previously approved by Members. Any underspend on the final project would reduce the funding requirement from the Revenue Reserve for Capital Schemes. The proposed energy efficiency works to support the Council's Climate Change Strategy were highly welcomed by Members.

RESOLVED: That the contract for the re-felt and roof insulation upgrade works at Larkfield Leisure Centre be awarded to Acclaim Contracts Ltd.

CB 24/98 LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND

(Reason: LGA 1972 – Sch 12A Paragraph 3 – Financial or business affairs of any particular person)

The report presented details in respect of Round 3 of the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) which, following a change in criteria and match funding arrangements, was now considered a suitable funding opportunity for the Borough Council. This grant opportunity would support the delivery of temporary accommodation and homes for use under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme.

A Memorandum of Understanding (attached at Annex 1) detailed the number of units to be delivered and the grant funding requirements.

Cabinet had due regard to the delivery approach presented, the risk assessment, policy, financial and value for money considerations and the legal implications.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) acceptance of the Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3 funding be approved;
- (2) authority be delegated to the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Transformation and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing, to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (attached at Annex 1); and
- (3) the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health liaise with the Director of Finance and Transformation, and relevant Cabinet Members, to enable the Borough Council to move forward with acquisition within the funds set out in the Capital Plan (as set out in (4) below) once a suitable property has been identified.

(Agreed by Cabinet under Decision Notice D240091CAB)

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (4) it be recommended to Full Council that the Capital Plan be updated to include an allowance of up to £400,000 (to be funded from Temporary Accommodation Reserve and/or s106 contributions) as the Borough Council's contribution to the Year 1 property acquisition.

***Recommendation to Council**

CB 24/99 HOUSING TEAM STAFFING

(Decision Notice D240092CAB)

(Reasons: LGA 1972 – Sch 12A Paragraphs 1 and 2 – Information relating to an individual and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual)

Consideration was given to proposals to extend a number of temporary staffing arrangements within the Housing Service whilst a review would be forthcoming to address these in the longer term, in response to recommendations made by a temporary accommodation/homelessness consultancy review.

Due regard was given to the policy, financial and value for money considerations and the legal implications and it was proposed that the extensions be funded from the balance of the homelessness reserve. There was a risk that if the current arrangements were not extended there would be an impact on service delivery which could lead to increased numbers of households in temporary accommodation.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the extension of the four temporary Housing Allocation posts from 1 October 2024 until 31 March 2025 as set out in the report, be agreed;
- (2) the extension of the temporary Triage Officer agency arrangement from 1 October 2024 until 31 March 2025 as set out in the report, be agreed;
- (3) the extension of the temporary Move On Officer role from 1 October 2024 until 31 March 2025 as set out in the report, be agreed; and
- (4) the total cost of the above, as set out in the report, be funded from the homelessness reserve.

The meeting ended at 8.44 pm